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Acting Deputy Chief (CYCLAN) ME

24 May 1952

Chief, ()

Operational
North Caucasians in Jordan

1. The following information regarding North Caucasians residing in Jordan is submitted in response to the request made in WASH 064. The information was obtained from North Caucasian leaders in Jordan.
2. As pointed out in ANNA 042, there are approximately 12,000 Circassians residing in the East Jordan cities and villages of Amman, Zarqa, Husaifa, Sukhna, Azraq, Suwailah, Wadi Siir, Jarash, and Ra'ur. In addition, there are about 3,000 Shishans residing in Zarqa, Sukhna, and Suwailah. It is estimated that about 7,000 of Jordan's Circassians reside in Amman, while about 3,500 have settled in Wadi Siir, the next largest center. Groups ranging from 800 to about 2,000 are found in the other communities referred to above.
3. Practically all of the Circassians and Shishans in Jordan arrived during the period 1880-1905. Many fled Russia because of religious persecution, and were welcomed by the Turks in Jordan, where they served as a buffer between the Arabs and the occupying Turks. The Circassians and their neighbors, the Shishans, turned to agriculture upon arriving in the Arab world and continue to concentrate on farming, even to this day. Rarely does one find a Circassian engaged in importing, exporting, or tending shop.
4. It should be pointed out that most Jordanians fail to distinguish between Circassians and Shishans and generally refer to all of them as Circassians.
5. Although reports conflict as to the number of Circassians who have emigrated to Jordan since 1941, most reliable figures indicate that about 67 arrived from Italy in 1947 and 119 in 1948.

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This group of 186 was admitted from Italy following a plea by Said Asma Kurti, Jordanian Circassian leader, to the late King Abdullah, on behalf of the group which fled with the Germans following the 1942 retreat from the Caucasus. The 1947 group included about four women and five men beyond military age. Tschurin Sochasko, a former officer in the Soviet Army, and a graduate of the military academy at Frunzlar in 1936, led the group to Jordan. The 1948 group was estimated to have included approximately 19 women and 21 older men. Djangory Chalaichen, reputedly an ex-member of the Caucasian Government in the USSR prior to fleeing, led the second group.

6. Forty-five of the 186 Circassians who entered Jordan during the period 1947-48 departed for Syria in 1948 under the leadership of Mamud Maltchokoff in order to join the Syrian Army in the fight against the Israelis. Although Maltchokoff has returned to Jordan, most of the 45 remained in Syria. Maltchokoff is reported to have been a member of the executive council of the city of Maltchok prior to fleeing with the Germans in 1942. Of the remaining group of 141 emigrants, it is estimated that between 80 and 100 are in the 17-40 age category.
7. As stated above, Circassian migration to Jordan began about 1880 and continued until about 1940. Except for a number of family patriarchs and the group that entered in 1947-48, most of the Circassians and Shishans residing in Jordan were born in the Kingdom. Between WW I and WW II only two Circassians were admitted to Jordan, namely Tschurin Sultan and Tschiridan Khurzen. The latter was a colonel in the Tsarist Army prior to his departure from the USSR. It is believed that except for the 85 men over 40 years of age who entered the country in 1947-48, the rest of the Circassians (over 40 years old, born in Russia, now residing in Jordan) are of little value to us from an operational point of view.
8. As mentioned above, the Circassians and Shishans in Jordan are primarily engaged in agriculture. They are hard working farmers and set a good example for the Arabs. A few of them have acquired large tracts of farm land in the Jordan and Jordan Valley areas. Those who owned land in Amman proper have profited greatly because of the rise in property values which resulted from the influx of Palestinian refugees in 1948.
9. The Circassians have been regarded as the protectors of the other minorities in the country. Christian Arabs and various non-Arab minority groups such as the Armenians, Greeks, and Persians seek the assistance of the Circassians from time to time. It has been the practice of the Government to include a Circassian in each Cabinet who is, in turn, looked upon as the champion of the non-Muslims in the country. Although the Circassians have adopted Arab names and the Arabic language, they still regard themselves as apart from and superior to the Arabs.

King Abdullah employed Circassians as Palace Guards, and a number of them are still found in the Arab Legion.

10. Except for a few individuals, the Circassians do not take an active part in local political affairs. They have organized a sports club and a benevolent society in Amman. Tcherin Sooboko is the more or less self-appointed spokesman of the post WW II Circassian refugees in Jordan and is the representative of the Caucasus organization whose headquarters are at 40 Steinstrasse, Munich, Germany.

11. The following are the leading personalities among the Circassians of Jordan:

- a) Said Pasha Mufti - Generally regarded as the leader of the Jordanian Circassians. He is wealthy, honest and popular among the Circassians, Shistans, Arabs and minorities. He formerly served as Prime Minister and is presently Deputy Prime Minister.
- b) Rifaat Mufti - Director of Passports and brother of Said Pasha. Educated at American University of Beirut and is married to one of the 1947 emigrés.
- c) Dr. Shawqat Mufti - Brother of Said Pasha, and Director of the Government Hospital.
- d) Abbas Pasha Mirzi - Ex-Minister of Interior. Like the Muftis, he is from one of the old Circassian families in Jordan. He is a member of the present opposition and is therefore opposed to Said Pasha. As a rule, either Said Pasha or Abbas Pasha is included in the Jordan cabinet.
- e) Wasfi Mirzi - Relative of Abbas Pasha from Haddi Mir. Deputy in Parliament and a wealthy land-owner.
- f) Ismail Jan Beg - Presently serving as Manager of IFU at Haifa. Not on too friendly terms with Said Pasha and his group.
- g) Tcherin Sooboko - (see RJA-W-77) As stated in Para 10, he is the representative of the Caucasian group with headquarters in Germany. He is a young man, about 32 years of age, and has one object in mind, namely to return to his homeland. He is intelligent and shrewd and will undertake anything to accomplish his goal. He is thinking in terms of an independent Caucasus rather than a united Russia. Because of this point of view and because of his efforts to speak on behalf of all the Circassians in Jordan, Subject has incurred the enmity of the Circassians who came here many years ago, as well as the hostility of some of the recent arrivals. In particular, he clashes with the Muftis, who describe him as a treacherous and self-seeking individual. And Mahmud Maltchek referred to in para 8 above. Sooboko, who recently lost his position with the municipality, revealed that he plans

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to use Nassir Mirzi as the figure-head of his group so that he himself can remain in the background. He is on friendly terms with Abbas Pasha Mirzi.

12. Apropos the Circassians, we wish to call to your attention a certain lady who, claiming to be an American citizen and identifying herself as Tatiana A. Schaufues, visited Jordan during April 1952. She was accompanied by a Mr. Tremou who was introduced as the director of a refugee organization in Geneva, and she claimed that she was representing the Tolstoy Foundation of New York City. She contacted various Circassian leaders in Amman and explained that she was trying to determine what assistance would be required to resettle Jordan's "1947-48" Circassians in Canada, the United States and New Zealand. She attracted considerable attention among Jordan's Circassians. Tashiriz Scobzoko objected to her suggested solution of a united Russia and stated that she claimed to represent "American Intelligence". According to Scobzoko, she threatened to carry out her proposals with the assistance of "American Intelligence", regardless of any local objections.